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August 15, 2003

The Honorable Norman Mineta  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta,

We are writing on behalf of the Members of the Association of Floral Importers of Florida (AFIF) to express our concern about the International Air Transport Association (IATA) request for an antitrust exemption for their Resolution 502 proposal to amend the current standards that govern how the airlines price low-density cargo.

Approximately two-thirds of the flowers consumed in the U.S. are imported through Miami International Airport (MIA) and AFIF Members account for the majority of that volume. Our flowers are only imported by air and flowers represent the number one import through MIA. Anything that affects these air carriers greatly impacts our Members, as would a change to the current rule regarding low-density cargo. Currently flowers are shipped based on weight, not on volume. The proposed change to Resolution 502 would change the current rule from the present 6000 cc to 5000 cc per kg, increasing the number and cost of shipments that are priced on volume rather than actual weight.

AFIF believes that this proposed change will have a negative impact on our South Florida industry and the U.S. floral industry as a whole. Also, a 20 percent increase in shipping costs is of significant concern to our suppliers who daily export fresh flowers to the United States (from such fragile economies as Colombia and Ecuador).

Since the South Florida floral industry relies solely on air transportation to bring in our delicate product, and although the proposed change to Resolution 502 is clearly aimed at increasing airfreight revenues for the airlines, we, like many other industries in these uncertain economic times, are unable to take on any more additional expense burdens.

AFIF does not know what the future will bring for our member companies. Individual companies will make business decisions based on their own company's specific situation, but I can assure you, this industry cannot take another 20% economic hit.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and we would be happy to meet with you at any time to discuss this further. I've also attached an industry statistics sheet for your information.

Sincerely,

Lin Watts  
Executive Vice President

cc: AFIF Members